



Martyn's Law update

NALC recently submitted [written evidence](#) to the Home Affairs Committee, which is undertaking [pre-legislative scrutiny of the Draft Terrorism \(Prevention of Premises\) Bill](#), which sets out requirements that venues and organisations will have to meet to ensure public safety. The proposed legislation is known as [Martyn's Law](#) in tribute to Martyn Hett, who was killed alongside 21 others in the Manchester Arena terrorist attack in 2017 and whose mother, Figen Murray, has since campaigned for greater security at venues. In our submission, we supported the government's aim of making the public safer at publicly accessible locations and security measures but stressed that interventions should be reasonable, affordable, and proportionate. While we are keen to work with the government on the bill, we are concerned about the lack of engagement with the sector. We also highlighted the impact the legislation would have on councils as organisers of events covered by the duty, the lack of an impact assessment including costs, concerns about the capacity thresholds being used and the need for proportionality, especially of risk, lack of clarity on the regulator and enforcement, the need for a communications campaign and dedicated programme of support and guidance, and an extensive lead in time to allow councils to prepare. I'm pleased that many of our concerns are included in the [committee's response published today](#). The committee has warned the draft bill fails to address the real risk of terror attacks and that small venues face implementing costly measures while larger venues fall out of scope. It calls for the legislation to be introduced in stages (with larger venues first), further research to assess the threat to small organisations and venues, adequate funding to be in place, a communications campaign and comprehensive proposals for the regulator. Martyn's Law is among the priorities that the respective chairs of NALC and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) have agreed to work closely on, and we are in the process of developing and agreeing on a work programme to engage with the government and provide support to the sector.

[SLCC | Martyn's Law – Home Affairs Committee Report](#)

The Home Affairs Committee has now finished its pre-scrutiny inquiry of the draft Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill – Martyn's Law.

Whilst the Committee supports the intent of the bill and the proposed measures to improve the response to terror attacks in larger venues, it calls on the government to introduce the legislation in stages, beginning with larger venues, and review its implementation annually to assess its impact. It also calls for further research to better assess whether the threat to smaller venues is sufficient to require them to undertake anti-terrorism measures. The government is due to respond to the report by 27 September 2023.

SLCC submitted written evidence to this inquiry supported by survey feedback from its members. We have urged the Home Office to work with the SLCC on this, as practitioners in the field, as well as with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

[Terrorism \(Protection of premises\) draft bill: overarching documents - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/terrorism-protection-of-premises-draft-bill-overarching-documents) – This contains draft documents for the bill should it be passed. There is a risk assessment / plan document available to use when assessing the risk of a terrorist attack at a venue.

Possible costs should the law be applicable, 1st aid training, anti-terrorist training, fire safety training, additional resources required onsite such as security and physical equipment to control a range of situations such as barriers, 1st aid, fire extinguishers.

This may also have an impact on Council insurance should they assess that they have a high risk.

Loss of productive sites could reduce income to councils.

Extract from Response to the Draft Bill

The Government has not provided a rationale or any evidence for why capacity figures of 100 and 800 for standard and enhanced tier premises have been chosen, and why certain types of premises are excluded entirely. We wholly agree that larger venues—such as Manchester Arena—should be required to undertake the sort of measures set out in the Draft Bill. However, we are concerned that the capacity figure of 100 for standard tier premises, which will capture some small and micro-sized businesses, and community-run and voluntary groups, could be disproportionate and burdensome. This category is particularly troubling because it would include many smaller venues that may not have sufficient resources to cover costs of what is proposed. It would also cover village halls, places of worship and similar amenities that provide vital community support, often on low budgets. If such places are forced to close down, this represents a win for terrorism, rather than an effective means of combatting it. (Paragraph 39)